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King hosts Iftar

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday hosted an Iftar in honour of the Jerusalem Construction Committee members, the mufti of Jerusalem, members of the Islamic Iftar and Awqaf council, Islamic judges in Jordan and the occupied West Bank and Christian clergymen.

The banquet was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, His Royal Highness Prince Faisal, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shakher, the King's private Chamberlain Prince Ali, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi and Chief Islamic Justice Noah Salman. After the Iftar, Mufti of Jerusalem Suleiman Al Jaabari and President of Al Azhar University in Gaza Mohammad Awwad delivered speeches in which they congratulated the King on the occasion of the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan. The two lauded King Hussein's stands on various Arab issues and commended his leadership.

1 killed in S. Lebanon

MARJAYOUN (AP) — A squad of guerrillas clashed with militiamen of the Israeli-affiliated South Lebanon Army (SLA) Wednesday inside the enclave Israel occupies in South Lebanon. Security sources said one infiltrator was killed. The sources said the 15-minute, midday clash took place between the villages of Aramita and Rihan, 12 kilometres north of Marjayoun, provincial capital of Israel's self-styled "security zone." The sources said the infiltrators escaped in the direction of Iglim Al Tuffah, a resistance stronghold that faces Rihan and Aramita.

Qatari leader sends greetings to Saddam

BAGHDAD (R) — Qatari heir apparent and Defence Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani sent Ramandan greetings to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported Wednesday. INA said the congratulatory telegram marking the start of the Holy Month was sent in response to an earlier message sent to Sheikh Hamad by President Saddam. "Reciprocate best wishes on this holy occasion, pleading Almighty for a happy and prosperous return for you and the Iraqi people," Sheikh Hamad said in his telegram. President Saddam also exchanged congratulatory telegrams with the leaders of Oman.

Developer of oral polio vaccine dies

WASHINGTON (AP) — Polish born medical pioneer Albert Sabin, who developed the oral vaccine that helped end the frightening threat of polio, died Wednesday. He was 86. He died at Georgetown University Medical Centre of congestive heart failure, said his daughter Amy Horne. Mr. Sabin has been admitted to the hospital on Feb. 22 after suffering heart failure, said spokeswoman Jody Klein. The oral vaccine that Mr. Sabin developed, along with an injectable type found earlier by Dr. Jonas Salk, helped eliminate the paralysing disease. Mr. Sabin tested his vaccine on himself and prison volunteers before it gained wide acceptance.

Defence lawyers quit Algiers trial

ALGIERS (R) — Defence lawyers in Algiers walked out of a special court trial of two fundamentalists Wednesday because it was held behind closed doors, an attorney said. The trial of Abdul Kader Boukchém and Mohammed Abdul Majid was the first by a special tribunal in Algiers armed with tough penalties, including the death penalty.

Israeli guard stabbed in Jerusalem amid debate on future of Gaza Strip

Combined agency dispatches

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — A Palestinian woman stabbed an Israeli security guard in Jerusalem's walled Old City Wednesday, puncturing his lung in the third attack targeting individual Israelis in three days.

The attack came amid a renewed debate over Israel's occupation of the crowded, impoverished Gaza Strip after three Israelis were killed by Gazans in the past two days.

Workers from Gaza were blocked from entering Israel for a second day after a 19-year-old Palestinian from the strip killed two Israelis and wounded nine Monday in Tel Aviv. On Tuesday, an Israeli who ventured into Gaza was shot to death.

The army clamped a curfew Wednesday on the Rafah refugee camp where the Israeli was killed Tuesday — and Israeli Radio said some 100 Palestinians were detained for questioning.

Police said the guard, wounded in Wednesday's stabbing, whose condition was described by doctors as fair, worked for a seminary founded by Messianic Jews

asserting a right to settle in all of the Holy City.

The woman, aged 35 and from nearby Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, was captured by a second guard, they added.

Arab-Israeli bloodshed has surged since Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin expelled to Lebanon 415 Palestinians in December.

Jews have killed 52 Palestinians Tuesday since there was no evidence to support initial reports a motorist fired on the man in response to being stoned.

While violence has increased as well recently the occupied West Bank the debate Wednesday centred on the narrow strip along the Mediterranean Sea.

Palestinians view the seminary's presence in the Muslim quarter as a provocation.

Police said the guards were escorting a Jewish woman and her two daughters who live in the adjacent Jewish quarter.

Jewish settlers demanded Mr. Rabin expel more Palestinians in response to the killing of Israelis. He expelled alleged members of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas and Islamic Jihad after the killing of six soldiers in De-

cember.

The expulsions stalled 16-month-old U.S.-brokered Middle East peace talks. A senior Jordanian official said Tuesday that Arabs would meet this week in Syria to discuss the expellees and the talks.

Police said Wednesday they now suspect a Jewish extremist may have killed a 74-year-old Palestinian Tuesday since there was no evidence to support initial reports a motorist fired on the man in response to being stoned.

White violence has increased as well recently the occupied West Bank the debate Wednesday centred on the narrow strip along the Mediterranean Sea.

Palestinian youths throw stones at Israeli soldiers in Khan Yunis in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Palestinians sceptical over American pledge of 'active' role in peace talks

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The American declaration made by Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his recent tour to the region that the U.S. would be an active partner in the Middle East peace negotiations took the Palestinians by surprise.

The Arab parties to the negotiations and the Palestinians had demanded American intervention on several occasions during the past 16 months of talks, hoping that the U.S. could influence Israel to budge on substantive issues, and thus achieve progress in the otherwise stalled negotiations, particularly on the Palestinian track. But former President George Bush's administration insisted on non-interference in the

talks, but ensured that the talks continued.

Mr. Christopher's declaration the U.S. would be taking an active part in the talks came as a surprise to the Palestinians, especially at a time when the talks were in suspension over Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion to southern Lebanon of more than 400 Palestinians.

The failure of the Security Council to ensure Israel's compliance with Resolution 799 — calling on Israel to immediately repatriate all the expellees — followed U.S.-brokered Israeli offer to take back only 101 of the evicted and the rest before the end of the year had placed fears within the Palestinian leadership on whether this American participation in the talks would indeed be positive. The U.S. had insisted

that Israel's offer was "in line with 799," leading the Security Council to welcome the offer as a "step in the right direction."

Already pressured by the U.S., the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the peace delegates now fear this pressure could increase if the U.S.'s active participation meant dealing with the basis of the talks — resolutions 242 and 338 — in the same way Washington dealt with 799.

"The implications of the U.S.'s handling of Resolution 799 has placed a dark shadow on 242 and 338," said Tayseer Aroui, an advisor to the Palestinian peace negotiators.

Mr. Aroui warned that if the American participation in the peace talks was along the lines of

(Continued on page 5)

Somalis declare weaponry, manpower

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Somalia's warring factions have declared their weaponry and personnel to a joint U.S.-U.N. ceasefire committee but it will probably take much longer than originally planned to disarm them.

The 15 factions were complying with a Tuesday deadline given a month ago by Lieutenant-General Robert Johnston, commander of U.S. forces in the country.

"They have all presented the information on heavy weapons and personnel. But the indications are that it is not 100 per cent satisfactory," U.N. spokesman Farouk Mawlawi said.

The factions have declared mortars, bazookas, rocket launchers and heavy machineguns, many of them mounted on what the Somalis call "technical," or pickup trucks used as battlewagons until U.S.-led forces landed in December.

Mr. Mawlawi told reporters the ceasefire committee had named 12 "cantonal" sites where the militias will deposit their heavy weapons, but there were problems with separate "transition areas" where the militiamen are meant to assemble.

The staff of the multinational task force could not find many of the sites proposed by the militias on their maps. "Maps have now been given to them and after the

(Continued on page 5)

Women demand reconstruction role, page 2

Rabbani, Hekmatyar reach peace accord

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Afghanistan's president agreed Wednesday to share power with his main adversary in a bid to end months of brutal factional fighting that has left much of the capital in ruins.

According to a draft peace accord that must still be ratified by other rebel leaders, Burhanuddin Rabbani will remain as president for the next 10 months, while his fundamentalist adversary, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, will become prime minister, said presidential spokesman Mohammad Aziz Morad.

"All sides have shown flexibility," Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said after shuttling between Mr. Rabbani and Mr. Hekmatyar. "Hopefully the war and fighting in Afghanistan will end very soon."

The agreement still must be ratified by leaders of all nine groups that ousted the Soviet-backed communists last April after a 14-year civil war.

"Engineer Hekmatyar is ready to take up the post of prime minister and if there are no objections by the other groups we see no difficulty to that effect," Mr. Morad said.

A few small differences remained, he said.

Mr. Rabbani was insisting on recognition of the assembly of nationwide delegates that last December elected him as president for the next two years but conceded to Mr. Hekmatyar's demand for general elections before his term expired, he said.

Mr. Hekmatyar has accused Mr. Rabbani of rigging his election in his capacity as president but only as leader of his Jamiat-e-Islami party, and the two had not met since last September.

U.N. team to visit 'new sites'

in Iraq

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — A team of U.N. nuclear experts arrived Wednesday to check on reports that Iraq may still have an underground plutonium reactor.

Iraq denies it is carrying out any covert atomic activities, but the team of 24 weapons experts, armed with latest intelligence tips, plan to visit as many as 24 sites across the country during its week-long mission, team leader Dimitri Perricos said.

"We are going to look for everything, including reactors, uranium-enrichment equipment and procurement data," Mr. Perricos, a Greek, told reporters. His team has experts from 13 countries, includes three Americans.

"There is information that they may have something connected with nuclear," Mr. Perricos said.

"We have to go and take a look to see if the information is correct, the information is semi-correct or completely or partially wrong," Mr. Perricos told reporters.

Hamas officials have said that the group's strength and resistance activities would be confined to the occupied territories. They strongly deny Hamas involvement in terrorist activities or any

acts of violence abroad.

Hamas representatives in Amman asserted that the U.S. decision to cut off contacts with the group was aimed at appeasing Israel and contradicted the erstwhile American policy towards the group, which gained political prominence after Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion to South Lebanon of more than 400 Palestinians suspended of membership in Hamas or Islamic Jihad, another hardline Muslim group.

"We are astonished by the new American position, and it is proof of the influence of the Zionist lobby on the new American administration's policies,"

Hamas representative in Jordan Mohammad Nazzal told the Jordan Times.

"The United States' decision

and justifications are a way of apologising to Israel for meeting

(Continued on page 5)

U.N. steps up relief in Iraq, page 2

Hamas 'surprised' at U.S. move to end contacts, rejects bomb charge

By Wafa Amr
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanians will vote for candidates seen capable of serving them better in terms of providing services rather than raising promising ideological slogans in the Kingdom's next parliamentary elections, an opinion poll says.

The poll, conducted by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan in January, also found that voter turnout would be almost double that of the last elections held in November 1989.

The survey, covering 1,197 voters from all over the Kingdom, found that the level of politicisation of the Jordanian electorate is very low, and that voters give priority to social and economic needs over all other considerations, be they religious beliefs or tribal family links, according to sources close to the study.

The results of the survey, described by the sources as "widely representative" of the electorate, have not been released for public information in a marked contrast from other institutions which rushed their findings to the media leading to what many analysts describe as confusion among the readers.

"It needs a scientific approach and analysis," he said. "We are

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Iran seeks good relations with Gulf states, but U.S. ties depend on Clinton

NICOSIA (AP) — A senior Iranian official urged in an interview published Wednesday good relations with pro-Western Gulf Arab states, but said ties with Washington hinged on President Bill Clinton dropping "hostile" policy towards Iran.

Mr. Perricos would not identify the new sites or say why the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), charged by the Security Council to neutralise Iraq's nuclear weapons programme, had not visited them during 17 previous inspections.

Mr. Perricos is leading his 10th session to Iraq.

He said IAEA inspections would continue because he believed Iraq was still far from full compliance with the nuclear inspectors. "It has not complied

(Continued on page 5)

U.N. steps up relief in Iraq, page 2

hands of Egypt involved in certain provocations in the region, including the issue of the Iranian islands."

Last September, Iran created a furor among Gulf states by claiming full sovereignty over Abu Musa, a tiny island which Tehran had jointly controlled with the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Mr. Moayeri said Iran had extended a hand of friendship to the Gulf Arab states, but regretted their cold response.

"Iran has always announced readiness to cooperate with the Persian Gulf states," Mr. Moayeri said. But "the Gulf states have not adopted a similar friendly stand towards Iran."

Mr. Moayeri also said Iran wanted good ties with Europe, but added Tehran would not revoke the death sentence against author Salman Rushdie.

Middle East News

U.N. steps up relief in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — The United Nations said Wednesday it would ferry in large amounts of humanitarian supplies to Iraq before an aid agreement expires this month.

"We do have some more money and substantial amounts of a variety of supplies is on its way to Iraq," Thomas Ekwall, representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), told Reuters.

Mr. Ekwall said a chartered Ilyushin aircraft would land in Iraq Friday with 45 tonnes of medical and food supplies.

"The supplies include 3.4 million doses of insulin, 285,000 sets of bloodbags, 500,000 syringes, 500,000 needles and 1,500 sets of food baskets for the benefit of children and mothers in Iraq," Mr. Ekwall said.

He said each food basket weighed 14.5 kilogrammes

and contained milk powder, lentils, vegetable oil, sugar, tomato paste, fish and cheese.

"It is a great variety spanning from sophisticated equipment for water sanitation and installations to essential drugs and medical equipment," he added.

U.N. and private relief organisations are taking advantage of a lull in attacks on relief convoys to honour commitments to Iraq before a current aid agreement expires at the end of the month, U.N. sources said.

A spate of mines and bombs temporarily halted U.N. supplies to the north in December.

U.N. relief workers blame what they say is Baghdad-inspired harassment while the government says Kurds who represent the presence of foreigners in Kurdistan are responsible.

Mr. Ekwall said the U.N. Department of Humanitarian

Affairs had proposed sending a mission to Iraq to assess future needs.

"They have sent a request to the government of Iraq and there has been no response so far," he said.

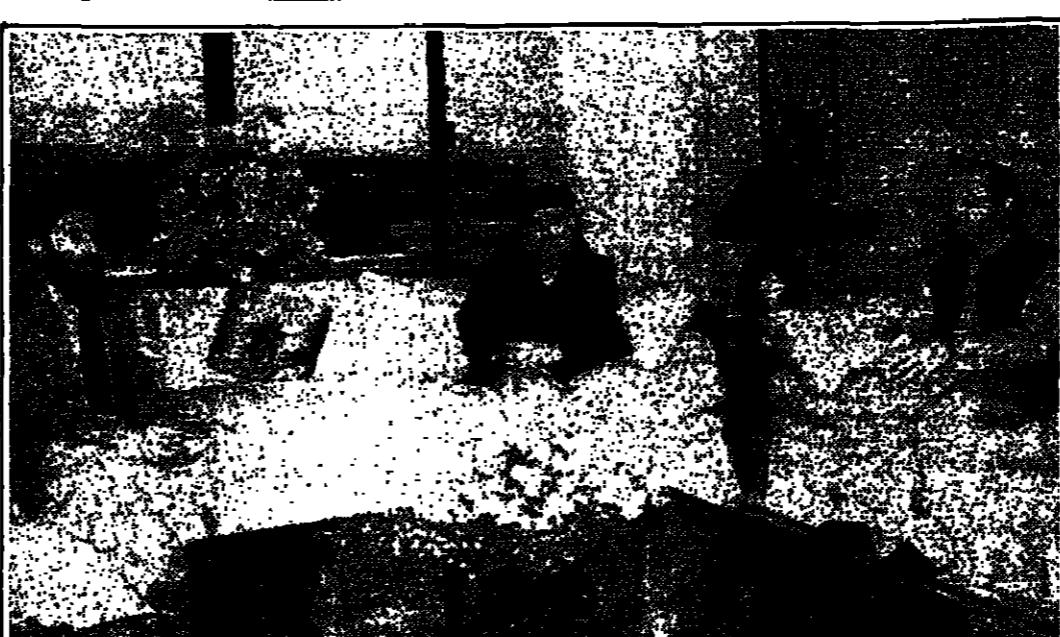
He said UNICEF had an agreement with the government but "without some kind of understanding of how the relief programme should be continued we would not be able to provide assistance to the same extent as we have been doing now."

He said an understanding was necessary "for working in Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaimaniyah," — all locations in the northern, Kurdish-controlled area.

Most U.N. relief to the beleaguered 3.5 million Iraqi Kurds comes through Turkey but the U.N. believes it would be hazardous to operate in Iraqi Kurdistan without Baghdad's consent.

U.N. relief workers blame what they say is Baghdad-inspired harassment while the government says Kurds who represent the presence of foreigners in Kurdistan are responsible.

Mr. Ekwall said the U.N. Department of Humanitarian



PEACE TALKS: Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (right) Wednesday meets with Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani (centre) and dissident leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in Islamabad to mediate a solution to the continuing political and military conflict in Afghanistan (AFP photo)

Somali women demand reconstruction role

By Christopher Burns
The Associated Press

MOGADISHU — Widowed by civil war, struggling to care for their children amid famine, Somali women are demanding a voice in rebuilding a country ruined by the battles of men.

Women's delegations organised by the United Nations plan to take part in an aid conference and peace talks this month in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

A U.N. aid package proposal lists women's issues, but so far earmarks only \$500,000 in funding for women's groups.

"We've opened our eyes now; we want to be decision makers and throw some of those men out of their positions," said Falihada.

Abdullahi Noor, whose face is drawn and sad, older than her 32 years.

She lost her husband to civil war, her eldest son was killed by bandits and she still has eight young children to feed in Bardere, one of the cities worst-hit by famine.

Mrs. Noor has rented a truck and sold food in a town outside Bardere, joining many of her countrywomen in commerce.

Rickety corrugated stalls have sprouted along streets in Mogadishu and other cities, and many are run by women who sell food, clothing, cigarettes and other items.

Mrs. Noor was among 40 representatives from across Somalia who wrapped up a conference Tuesday that drew up lists of the U.N. in Somalia.

women's needs.

The women's conference agreed to set up a coordinating committee between women's groups, which run feeding centres, orphanages and other services. It called for job training centres, local health care workers and more schools.

Women should receive loans and grants to start their own small businesses such as handicrafts, catering and tailoring, conference participants agreed.

While there are no hard figures on how many widows are caring for their families, "a lot of households are headed by women," said Hawa Al Tayeb, a Sudanese who coordinates women's programmes for the U.N. in Somalia.

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Community (EC) broke a deadlock with Israel over the expulsion of hundreds of Palestinians, promising to resume commercial talks Wednesday.

The 12-nation trade bloc said Tuesday EC and Israeli diplomats were to meet in occupied Jerusalem for two days to discuss upgrading trade and political ties.

"We're absolutely willing to have talks with Israel," said Xavier Prats, spokesman of the EC's executive commission.

The announcement ended nearly three months of hesitation by the EC to continue the talks. The community condemned Israel's expulsion of 413 Palestinians on Dec. 17.

EC to restart commercial talks with Israel

While the EC never officially linked trade talks to the expulsions, it stalled on fulfilling its December pledge to set a date for further talks.

On Feb. 1, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told his EC counterparts Israel would take back 100 Palestinians immediately and repatriate the rest by year's end. It prompted the EC to consider reinstating the talks.

Israel is seeking expanded economic relations and aims to reduce its trade deficit with the EC.

But Mr. Prats said the talks which were to start Wednesday were only preliminary, adding, "There is no clear idea of where

this will lead."

Israel is already linked to the EC through a 1975 free trade agreement.

The accord, however, is less substantial than more recent EC arrangements with Western and Eastern European countries. It does not cover services, freedom of capital movement, scientific cooperation, or free trade for pharmaceuticals or energy products.

It is also out of date in comparison to EC accords with other Mediterranean nations.

Mr. Prats said the EC was trying to beef up trade and economic cooperation with all Mediterranean countries and does not want to leave Israel out.

CAIRO (AP) — For months, Egyptian officials have been piqued by foreign news reports of Muslim extremism and official warnings to Western travellers to avoid disturbed areas in Egypt.

From President Hosni Mubarak down, they maintained that Egypt was not alone in enduring terrorism. Mr. Mubarak called it "a global phenomenon." In their minds was a drop of more than 50 per cent in tourism, universally blamed on suggestions that attacks on foreign tourists had made Egypt unsafe.

Nevertheless, there have been no taunts, gloating or "we told you so" responses after last Friday's massive bombing at New York's World Trade Centre.

On Saturday, Egypt's leading government-owned newspaper Al Ayyam front-paged the Cairo and New York explosions side by side.

Monday's Al Akhbar, also state-owned, published three stories in the same fashion — a followup on the Cairo bombing, a report on the New York explosion and a roundup of terrorist incidents elsewhere. The headline: "A wave of sabotage sweeps the world."

Even the leading opposition newspaper, Al Wafd, which often complains of government abuses in combating terrorism, appeared eager to show Egypt's shared terror turmoil. Almost its entire front page Monday was devoted to the world's explosions.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Wednesday greets girl guides who collected donations in Irbid for the Third Annual Charity campaign organised by the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (Petra photo)

Princess Basma tours Irbid, Jordan Valley

IRBID (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Wednesday made a tour of Irbid and the northern Jordan Valley regions where she inspected the activities of the Third Annual Charity Campaign which she launched at the beginning of Ramadan.

In Irbid, the Princess met with groups of boy scouts and girl guides who are collecting contributions from the public as part of the activities of the campaign organised by the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QAF).

Princess Basma also opened a dress-making workshop at Prince Ali Club for Deaf Girls.

Last year the Princess donated the funds to establish the workshop as part of the income-generating projects targeted by the charity campaign.

The JD5,000 workshop employs 12 deaf girls who received training last year at Irbid Social Services Centre.

Her Royal Highness also visited Princess Basma Hospital in Irbid and inspected the social and health conditions of its patients. She met with several Irbid governorate deputies of the Lower House of Parliament, officials and private citizens.

The meeting involved a discussion of the ongoing activities of the charity campaign and its objectives. The Princess praised the role of the scouts movements in the governorate in bringing the campaign to a successful end and commended the public response to charity drive.

She said all donations collected in the governorate will be distributed to its needy and announced that she was donating 10 blood-testing units.

In the northern Jordan Valley, Princess Basma visited Al Harwiya Basic School where she inspected the conditions of the school's 80 students. The Princess presented the students with school uniforms and stationery.

Princess Basma ended her tour by meeting citizens at Sheikh Hassan village. The village mayor announced at the meeting the municipality's donation of eight dromms to QAF.

Her Royal Highness told the gathering that she was donating the cost of the establishment of a social services centre in the village. She then supervised the distribution of 22 tonnes of in-kind assistance to villagers in the town and surrounding areas.

The Princess also supervised the distribution of 10 income-generating projects to families in several villages.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King condoles Hiyassat family

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday delegated Chief of the Royal Protocol Mohammad Al Adwan to condole the Hiyassat family over the death of Abdul Fattah Hiyassat, the secretary general of the Jordanian Writers Association.

Prince Mohammad meets with PSD chief

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Wednesday visited the Public Security Department (PSD) and met with PSD Director Major-General Fadel Ali Heid. Prince Mohammad toured the various sections of the PSD's Command and Control Project and was briefed on its role.

Kabriti meets with German envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Kabriti Wednesday met with German Ambassador to Jordan Heinrich Reiners and discussed labour-related affairs. Their discussion covered Germany's assistance in finding more jobs for Jordanian workers and enhancing cooperation in workers' affairs.

Jordan invites Bahrain: minister to labour conference

MANAMA (Petra) — Jordan's Ambassador to Bahrain Shaker Arabyat Wednesday delivered a message to the Gulf state's Minister of Labour and Social Development Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa containing an invitation to attend an Arab labour conference in Amman. The conference, to open April 5, will be attended by Arab ministers of labour.

2 workshops to open on respiratory infections

AMMAN (Petra) — The Health Ministry is organising two workshops on March 6 and March 28 dealing with respiratory infections among children under five years of age. The workshops, to be attended by paediatricians from Jordan and other countries, are being organised in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

RSS plans solar energy meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Scientific Society (RSS) plans to organise a specialised seminar on solar energy in October. The five-day meeting will be attended by specialists from Arab and other countries.

Teachers to hold symposium on badia education

AMMAN (Petra) — The Teachers Club in Amman is organising a semi-regional symposium in April dealing with education of children in the badia and rural regions. The Ministry of Education and the regional office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) will play leading roles in the four-day conference. The ministry said Jordan, Libya, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and the Arab League will be represented at the conference.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of paintings by four Arab artists from the United States — Ghada Jumal, Heba Khalil, Suhai Nouris and Afaf Zurayk — at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery in Jabal Amman, between the First and Second Circles (10 a.m.- 4 p.m.)

★ Poster exhibition entitled "The British Film Makers of the 80s" at the British Council.

★ Islamic book exhibition at the Islamic Centre in Zarqa.

House bars ex-ministers from panel to probe nepotism

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Wednesday formed a nine-member committee to probe civil service appointments in the last three years for possible nepotism and unfairness in filling government positions.

After one of the most heated debates in its current session, the House dissolved a previous 18-member committee set up to investigate the matter because it included deputies who had served as ministers.

The earlier committee was set up last month to study lists of names and qualifications of people employed by the government since the beginning of 1992, which the government provided

to the House at the request of 15 deputies.

The deputies demanded a public discussion of the issue in light of alleged nepotism and injustices in public sector appointments.

The House initially restricted the committee's membership to nine, but 18 deputies joined after the House failed to agree on its members and asked parliamentarians willing to serve on the committee to register their names with its executive office.

The House later agreed to the increase in the number of members when appointments under these ministers are investigated.

The demand prompted an angry response from deputies who had served as ministers. They argued that such a notion puts their credibility in question and denies them a constitutional right to participate in all functions of the House as elected officials.

Opponents to their participa-

tion in the committee said their belief that former ministers should not be involved in studying government appointments was rooted in their concern to maintain the credibility and objectivity of the panel.

Irbid Deputy Husni Al Shiyab, who resigned from the previous panel, said the inclination not to include former ministers on the panel should not be seen as a conflict between deputies who served on the Cabinet and those who did not, but as a "way to make sure the committee was objective."

Former Minister of Labour Deputy Abdul Karim Al Dugmi, who volunteered for the dissolved panel, said if former ministers are to be banned from joining the committee, "deputies who had

pulled strings to secure jobs for others should also not be allowed to join."

Deputy Abdul Rauf Al Rawabdeh, a former minister, whose lengthy comment on the issue caused a row in the House, indicated that parliamentarians who say former ministers should not join the committee are driven by personal grudges and he challenged those deputies to "work in the light and give up false accusations and malicious representations."

"The House is 'engaging in a pointless debate,'" Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Al Abbadi said, adding that despite all the rhetoric and the big speeches, the House will not have the time to investigate government appointments before its term ends.

Dr. Abbadi suggested the House drop the issue in its entirety because it was too late for it to finish work on it.

The current and last session of the House concludes at the end of March.

During its four and a half hour session Wednesday, the House also referred to its Judiciary Committee the draft law on press and publications and the draft law on economic crimes. The two draft legislations were sent back to the House by the Upper House of Parliament after amending them.

The House also decided to hold three sessions a week instead of two, to make up for meetings that were aborted because of a lack of quorum.

New English School parents form group to tackle fee hikes

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Parents of students at the New English School (NES) have formed an 11-member committee to lead their campaign against what they describe as unjustified hikes in NES school fees.

Indications are also that the government, which usually adopts a hands-off policy in the financial and administrative areas of private schools in the Kingdom, is planning to intervene in the matter since secondary school students of NES staged a protest strike Saturday.

Beyond any immediate government action, the repercussions of the NES affair may also have major bearings on the status of all private schools in Jordan.

Parents, meeting at an NES school hall Tuesday evening, named the 11-member committee entrusted with contacting the parties concerned to present the case against the fee increases announced last week, participants in the meeting said.

The committee is scheduled to meet with the principal of the school Saturday and report back to the parents on the outcome.

One of the parents told Tuesday's meeting that her contacts with Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Education Thouqan Al Hindawi indicated that the Cabinet discussed the dispute since students did undertake a protest action of a nature that warrants government attention.

About 250 parents also met at the school Saturday complaining that the fee raises were too steep. Many of them said they would not be able to afford the hike and would be forced to transfer their children to cheaper schools.

Parents denied that they had instigated the protest action by secondary school students who stayed away from class for two hours Saturday morning.

Tuesday's meeting also discussed the possibility that the issue could easily spill over and bring about additional legislation related to private schools.

A new law on education is under debate in Parliament and sources indicated that the government might be inclined to add new provisions to the draft legislation to allow a certain measure of government control on the financial and administrative aspects of private schools.

Under the present law, the Ministry of Education concerns itself only with the curricula, vacations and other strictly academic affairs of private schools.

It also emerged during Tues-

Suspects under questioning in 2 separate murder cases

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police are questioning several suspects in two separate cases of murder which were discovered this week and hope to announce the findings of investigations soon, a senior source said Wednesday.

The source said there was no indication whatsoever of any link between the two deaths despite some similarities in the circumstances under which the bodies were discovered.

"We can categorically state that there is no relation between the two crimes," said the source, speaking to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity.

The gagged body of Abdul Hameed Salman, 30, member of a hardline Palestinian group, was found stuffed in a black plastic bag in a backstreet of the Baqaa camp Saturday. His hands and feet were tied and the cause of death was established as strangulation.

The body of Ayman Al Abbadi, 25, a first lieutenant in the Armed Forces, was discovered

Monday near the cigarette factory in Ras Al 'Ain; Abbadi was also strangled and his body was wrapped in a plastic bag, according to police reports.

Contrary to earlier reports, the source said, police were keeping the "possibility open" that the killing of Salman was politically motivated.

"Police understand that the murder victim was politically active and therefore they cannot rule out the possibility that the crime had political motivation," said the source. "At the same time it also appears that he was also having social problems. So all the investigators are keeping all angles."

Salman was a member of the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP-GC) led by Ahmad Jibril, who broke away from the PFLP of George Habash in the early 1970s to set up his own group.

Salman was politically active but did not occupy any official position in the group's hierarchy, according to Palestinian sources.

Some of the sources say that "personal revenge" could be the

A message from

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Music International (KMI)

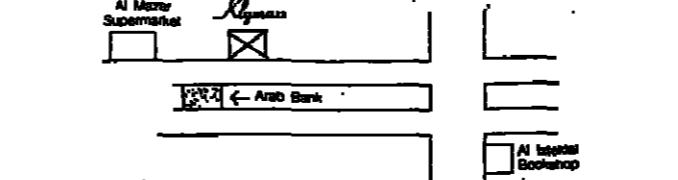
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U.S. grants Jordan \$31m in 5 economic aid agreements

AMMAN (J.T.) — Five U.S. economic aid agreements totalling a grant of \$31 million were signed with Jordan Wednesday, by Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz for the Government of Jordan and by U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Roger Harrison for the U.S. government.

The agreements were also signed by William T. Oliver, Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The maximisation of irrigation water management through the upgrading of the water conveyance system from the King Talal Reservoir to the Zeighan Division; and

— a public education and awareness campaign in water management and conservation that will be undertaken by a local private sector voluntary society.

The water quality improvement and conservation project, to be implemented by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation over a five-year period, will focus on improving the management of water resources, and on increasing the quality and quantity of water available in the Zarqa Basin System through improved wastewater treatment and water

conservation. The various components of the project will include: The clean-up and prevention of industrial and other water pollution by upgrading the As-Samra wastewater treatment system;

— the improvement of water resources management and water conservation through the establishment of a special "minor" water monitoring and management unit;

— the maximisation of irrigation water management through the upgrading of the water conveyance system from the King Talal Reservoir to the Zeighan Division; and

— a public education and awareness campaign in water management and conservation that will be undertaken by a local private sector voluntary society.

The primary objective of the family health services project is to improve the quality and cost-efficiency of primary care services, particularly mother and child care and birth spacing services, provided by government health centers and clinics.

The funds will also be used for technical assistance to improve the quality of existing services, to train Jordanian doctors, and to

establish a new family medicine training programme at the University of Jordan and the Jordan University for Science and Technology.

National agricultural development project is a nine-year project started by the National Centre for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer (NCARTT) in 1986 to stimulate greater agricultural production through applied extension services methodologies.

The agricultural marketing development project, which started in 1988, aims at reducing the balance in Jordan's trade deficit and at generating foreign exchange earnings through the stimulation of increased Jordanian exports and the development of marketing systems and strategies for agricultural exports, particularly fruits and vegetables.

The primary objective of the industrial development project is to raise the efficiency of Jordanian manufacturers in the production and marketing of quality industrial products at competitive prices.

The funds provided will focus on developing the Industrial Engineering Programme at the University of Jordan.

Arab panel to study educational broadcasts to occupied territories

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan will participate in a meeting of a pan-Arab educational committee to produce programmes to be broadcast to the Arab students in the Israeli occupied territories.

A statement here said the programmes, to be presented on Radio and television, follow a set curricula of general educational programmes in the Arab World which are lacking in many Arab educational institutions under Israeli occupation.

The source said "there is nothing new" in a series of attacks against shops and in around Amman since mid-September.

But, noted the source, "no new attacks have been reported since the arrest last week of three suspects who have confessed to executing at least three attacks."

At the same time, "it does not mean that the three are linked to the earlier crimes," said the source, referring to nine other incidents of assault and robbery or attempted robbery which occurred since mid-September.

"Police are continuing investigations and will definitely crack the cases," said the source.

such broadcast and their effect on the Arab students in occupied lands.

According to Ministry of Education sources here, Israeli authorities have frequently changed syllabuses, closed schools, shut down universities and constantly interfered in educational programmes and the activities of teaching staff at Arab educational institutions under West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Jordan Times

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Bosnians need more than meals

U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton's decision to airdrop food and medicine to Bosnian Muslims trapped in the eastern parts of the country is commendable but is a far cry from what the president promised during his presidential campaign.

Mr. Clinton was then visibly driven by moral values and humanitarian considerations when he called for making distinctions between the Serb aggressors and the Bosnian Muslims by lifting the arms embargo on the besieged Muslims in that country and even deploying U.S. armed forces for their rescue. President Clinton was angered and anguished then by the barbaric atrocities that Serbian forces committed against the Muslim people and decided that his country is morally obligated to act.

In spite of the continuation of the agony and suffering of the Muslim Bosnians, the new president appears to have lost his nerve and drive to help out the victims of Serbian aggression, to stop the systematic rape of Bosnian women and girls and to halt "ethnic cleansing."

In so wavering on an earlier commitment to seek and apply effective assistance to the victims in former Yugoslavia, the new president seems to have buckled under pressure from his European allies and warnings from his army generals and in the process lost his distinctive features as a liberal leader who promised to stand tall and strong in support of human rights and humanitarian law.

This American attitude is marked contrast with that of the Russian leadership. The Russians do not even bother to hide their open support of the Serbs by boldly supplying them not only with sophisticated arms and equipment but also with fighters as well.

The Bosnian Muslims need and deserve more than aerial dropping of urgently needed meals and medical supplies. There is no less than 20,000 Bosnian Muslims currently trapped in the Cerska region, desperately trying to flee the war zone while the eyes of Mr. Clinton and other Western leaders are turned away from the tragedy that requires urgent remedy. This U.S. disloyalty and unfaithfulness to its own ideals and principles comes at a time when the conflict in former Yugoslavia offers the first test case for Washington's true commitment to democracy, human rights and humanitarian principles.

It behoves President Clinton to be loyal to his electoral campaign pledges especially on matters that touch on human lives and human rights. The Bosnian Muslims need effective help before the Serbs succeed even more in changing facts in the field. The least they need is the supply of arms to defend themselves against an enemy that is openly aided by Moscow.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AS WAS expected from the Israeli government in the wake of the killing of two Israeli men and the wounding of eight others in Tel Aviv at the hand of a Palestinian man, further stringent measures have been imposed on the Arab population, said Al Dastour daily in its editorial Wednesday. The paper said that the Israeli government considered the incident a mere security one, requiring hardening of the policy in the face of the Palestinians. The Israelis have adopted repressive measures and threats to deport more Arabs from their homeland in retaliation for the Tel Aviv attack, instead of dealing with the root of the problem, which is linked to occupation and continued repression, the paper said. It said that by resorting to atrocities in reaction to the Tel Aviv incident Israel is falling yet again in further blunders that have led to the complication of this situation. The first reaction was to seal off the whole of the Gaza Strip, imposing curfews on 750,000 people and terrorising women and children there, continued the paper. It said that the Israelis have no other policy except terrorism and aggression, which has given rise to the cycle of violence. In no way, said the paper, can this siege on Palestinians, who refuse to succumb to occupation and repression, attain its purposes, nor can such atrocities help the Israelis to live in peace. The paper said that the peace process, which Israel claims to be keen on maintaining, should be manifested in towards a just solution to the problem.

THE LONG queues outside the Saudi Arabian consulate in Jabal Amman reflect the fervent religious faith and the desire on the part of Jordanians to perform this year's pilgrimage, one of the tenets of Islam, said Mohammad Subeih, a columnist in Al Dastour. The writer said that the queues can be seen from the early morning hours continuing throughout the day, clearly indicating that the Saudi officials are not only slow in issuing the visas for the would-be pilgrims but that they are unwilling to end the suffering of the huge numbers of the faithful outside their office. It is the right of the Saudi government to control the flow of pilgrims to Mecca and introduce measures ensuring security for all pilgrims and the country as well, yet simple procedures are required at the Saudi consulate to ease this situation, said the writer. He said that passports can be collected at the time during the day and distributed with visas stamped on them the next day without keeping people waiting in a line all day. The Saudis could also publish the names of those they issued visas and those rejected, for any reason, in the local press, suggested Subeih. He said that although efforts on the part of officials are appreciated, there is an urgent need now to find a way to ease the situation and to issue visas to the pilgrims as soon as possible.

By Jansen Partners

TWO POWERFULLY emotive forces — national liberation and militant Islam — are coalescing after a long period of divorce and antagonism. The coalescence is observable today, very obviously, in the struggle of the Palestinians — and particularly in the case of the 400 expellees alleged to be activists of the militant Islamic grouping, Hamas. The coalitions between Islam as an identity and national liberation is also present in the struggles going on in Kashmir and Bosnia.

In these two cases, people defined as different from their neighbours only by religion are fighting for either liberation, as in Kashmir, or survival, as in Bosnia. And militant Islamic guerrillas from outside have turned up to fight on the side of their coreligionists in both Kashmir and Bosnia, grafting themselves onto the national cause of their hosts.

In the recent past, a good, clear example of coalescence between national liberation and militant Islam was provided by the struggle of various Afghan groups against the invading Russian forces and, on the inside, against the Russians' local Communist Party ally. For years, the opposition in the so-called Afghan civil war was led by secular nationalists but when the capital city Kabul fell, it was the Islamic groups, though squabbling with each other, who were in the lead.

The coalescence to which we are referring is of a particular type and comes in stages. There is an existing secular, non-Islamic political struggle and Islam grafts itself onto this and in the end

Islam becomes the sustaining carrier wave, the sustaining motivation, of the political struggle. This is a new phenomenon, which we are seeing in Bosnia.

This development is to be distinguished from what happened during the 150 years in Muslim countries where, because Islam is a comprehensive all-embracing creed, the political struggle against the Western imperialist rulers was Islam itself inspired by the faith and led by men of religion. A particularly clear case of the total encapsulation of the political struggle of the Umma, the Muslim Nation, by Islam was the Achenean wars against the Dutch in north Sumatra in the 1880s which were led and organised by Ulama from start to finish.

But Islamic domination of the popular uprising was evident in many Afro-Asian countries besides Indonesia, in Afghanistan, the Sudan, Somaliland, Libya, Algeria, Morocco and West Central Africa. Secular political parties were relative late-comers in the national struggle, anything from 20 to 40 years after the Islamists, and as soon as they appeared they were in direct competition with the earlier Islamic groups. This competition was most clearly evident in Indonesia in the tussle between the Islamic parties — the Masjumi and Nahdlatul Ulama — and the National Party led by Sukarno and Hatta. There were two

reasons for this antagonism: in principle, Islam deplores secular creeds like nationalism and Communism which are alternative faiths and which also tend to divide the one, universal Islamic community according to geography or class. Furthermore, the Islamists and the nationalists were jostling each other to become the successor power to the imperial rulers.

Despite the preponderant role that Islam played in the resistance movement, it was the late-comer nationalism which became the successor to the former imperial ruler and it was the nationalists who established the independent states of Afro-Asia. Almost their first task was to crush the opposition of the Islamists (and to a much lesser extent of the leftists).

For about 30 years, from 1950 onwards, there was a complete divorce between secular nationalists and Islamists who were often locked in bloody battle with each other across the entire sweep of Afro-Asia, from the Philippines to West Africa.

Thus the present coalescing of the former antagonists is something new, and a reversal of recent history.

This is not a marriage of convenience, more a shot-gun wedding, an alliance brought about by external pressure. In Afghanistan, such external forces were the U.S., the West generally and the local surrogates of the West, see to it that the nationalists fail in their efforts of assertion so that

the disillusioned populace turns to militant Islam which, by the grace of God, seems better able to deliver "the goods".

This second variety of encouragement to militant Islam is observable both in Palestine and in Bosnia, but more clearly in the former than the latter. Thanks to the obduracy of Israel, sure of its support from the U.S., the more so under the Clinton administration, the 15-month-long peace process has produced no positive result, thus fulfilling the warnings of Hamas that the PLO's policy of talking with the enemy was a waste of time.

In Bosnia the seemingly-deliberate refusal of the Christian Western powers to help Bosnian Muslims against the Orthodox Serbs and the Latin Christian Croats is so glaringly obvious that the Bosnians, though reluctantly, have had to turn for help to their Muslim brethren, even though these brethren are not able or willing to do much for them.

Proof that the West has decided that, come what may, there must not be a Muslim state within the geographic confines of Europe, which is a Christian continent, is the chopping-up of Bosnia with its Muslim plurality, only three of which would be Muslim.

After the take-over of national liberation by militant Islam in Afghanistan, it is perhaps

appropriate that among the Muslim volunteers with the Bosnians are "the Afghans", Muslim guerrillas of various nationalities who trained and gained fighting experience with the Afghan Mujahideen. Members of this Islamic "Foreign Legion" are appearing in other Muslim countries where militant Islam and secularism are in conflict, such as Algeria, Egypt, Somalia and so on.

Secular nationalism, having taken over the popular struggle from militant Islam, in a return match, is itself being taken over by the latter, mainly because the independent nationalities are perceived as having failed to give their citizens a good life and something to believe in. Certainly, as compared to the nationalists, the Islamists are more committed, disciplined and less corrupt.

It is doubtful whether members of the secular Palestinian groups, Fatah, the Popular Front and others would have endured the hardships of the expellees' camp in southern Lebanon with the same determination as the followers of Hamas. But whatever the moral qualities of the Islamists, if every political struggle in the Third World against, for instance, the sole superpower, the U.S., is to be taken over by the Islamists, the result would be a succession of religious wars, of crusades versus Jihads — a daunting prospect.

This article appears simultaneously in the *Jordan Times* and the *Middle East International*.

Containing Russia

A task for the future?

By Brian Beedham

LONDON — The democracies of the Atlantic world may soon have to make a hard decision about Russia. The way things are going in Moscow, the flagging liberalism of Boris Yeltsin may not stay in command of events much longer.

If Russia then lurches off down a different road, the democracies will have to choose. Do they still treat Russia as the centerpiece of their policy towards the ex-Communist world, or does the building of the necessary precautions against this different Russia become the new centerpiece?

The end of the Yeltsin period and the arrival of a surfer Russia are not yet certainties, but they suddenly seem much likelier than recently.

Mr. Yeltsin himself, so recently claiming to be "master" of his country, has had to make concessions after concession to the conservatives and nationalists who dominate Russia's parliament. The Russian economy staggers along the brink of hyperinflation, its chances of not failing over the edge depending largely on how much money is printed by a central bank whose attitude towards

money-printing is that of the purple-nosed man who keeps on saying one more drink can't hurt. The Russian army, now of dubious utility for military purposes, is said to be thinking of going into politics instead.

If things do snap, the result will not be a return to Marxism. The Russians have had enough of that. But it could be a period of grumpy conservatism, in which Russia turns its back on the world while it fiddles hopelessly with its own economy. Or it could be a spell of populist nationalism, in which Russia gets pugnacious about the rights of Russians living in other parts of the ex-Soviet Union. (The Serbia option, you might say). Or Russia could just disintegrate, into three parts or more.

In any of these cases, it will no longer make much sense to think of Russia as a natural partner for the West. The new Russia will be too chip-on-shoulder, or too busy with its own concerns, to be of any help to the democracies in coping with the turbulent end-of-the-century world. Its own hopes of becoming a proper democracy will be in at least temporary suspension. The map may no longer even contain a recognisable Russia.

There will still be things to be done with this Russia, or its fragments. Hard work will still be needed to keep its nuclear weapons under control, and to persuade it not to sell its tanks and guns throughout Asia and Africa. But these things will add up to a policy of containment, not of cooperation — because Russia will no longer wish to cooperate.

Attention will then inevitably turn to the range of countries between Russia and the West — from Poland and Hungary to Belarus and Ukraine and, out there on the flank, Kazakhstan and the other Muslim parts of the old Russian empire. And here will come the hard decisions.

These countries will call for help. They will be alarmed about the effect on themselves of a further collapse of the Russian economy. They will be afraid of Russian nationalism turning from windy talk into brutal action.



Jordanian Communist Party

Preparing for a new era

IN the first of a series of articles profiling political parties in the Kingdom, Sausan Ghosheh talks to the head of the Jordanian Communist Party about the goals of a movement whose basic ideology has been shaken by many developments in the world.

Free, the JCP believes, Jordan can be through strengthening the roots of democracy. And by a fair distribution of goods and services; "social justice," the Communists hope to bring happiness to the people.

Social justice, says party secretary general Yacoub Zayadin, will culminate in a socialist society.

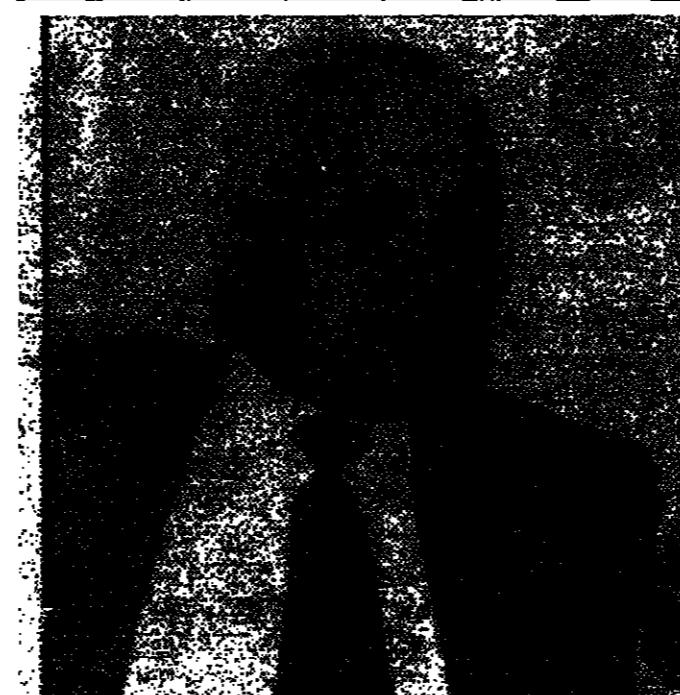
Since its formation in 1951 by Marxist and national liberation movements in Jordan and Palestine, the JCP has undergone significant changes both in its methodology and ideology.

The JCP still adheres to Marxist ideology, which it preached for decades, but it now uses Marxism as a guide to its work and not as a text to be taken verbatim, says Dr. Zayadin. "The JCP is attempting to adapt Marxist ideology to Jordanian society," says Dr. Zayadin, one of the JCP founders and its head since 1986.

Marxism entered the Arab World in its Stalinist form and paid no attention to Arab culture and heritage and thus failed to appeal to the masses. According to Dr. Zayadin, the JCP is currently studying Arab history, literature and philosophy, focusing on progressive and just ideas in them in order to develop them.

The fall of the Soviet Union has led some members of the JCP to lose faith in the JCP's basic principles. This, accompanied by tribal affiliations, has caused divisions and dissensions within the party, the most recent being the Freedom Party and the Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party.

Dr. Zayadin stated that dissensions have occurred in many Jordanian parties, despite their ideologies, and that the JCP still has "strong roots" in socie-



Yacoub Zayadin: Adapting Marxism to Jordanian society

recognised Jordan as a constitutional monarchy, explaining that His Majesty King Hussein has initiated the democratisation process, while "elected" presidents have not.

In the Arab World democratisation also seems to have made its way into the JCP.

The party, which has not held a conference in 40 years, is planning a conference in a few months. In this conference, it plans to introduce structural reform, and term

limitations and to reduce the hierarchy in its ranks to allow for more democracy and open dialogue.

These reforms were mainly triggered after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which the JCP attributes to the lack of democracy in the country and in the party's structure.

The JCP claims to be a politically, economically and organisationally independent political party, with the bulk of its money obtained through membership fees and donations. It is composed of workers, peasants, intellectuals and women.

Dr. Zayadin says women compose approximately 20 per cent of the JCP members, refusing to reveal the total membership. Some women, such as Emily Nafa, have reached top positions.

The relatively new democratic atmosphere in Jordan has permitted the JCP to operate in the open, after working underground for nearly 35 years. Dr. Zayadin claims the JCP was a target of imprisonment and torture since the mid 50s up until the parliamentary elections in 1989.

But now that it has acquired legal recognition, the JCP plans to enter the parliamentary elections, scheduled for November — and for the first time in its long history, it will contest election under its own name.

In the fifties, the JCP participated in the elections under the banner of the Nationalist Front and won a few seats; and in 1989 individual members of the JCP ran but not the Party. The candidates, however, did not have a strong showing in the 1989 elections and they attribute this to the fact that they were not allowed to operate publicly.

Now after the JCP obtained its license and after four years of the liberalisation process, Dr. Zayadin says his party's chances for a better showing in the elections have improved.

These countries will call for help. They will be alarmed about the effect on themselves of a further collapse of the Russian economy. They will be afraid of Russian nationalism turning from windy talk into brutal action.

Sports

Courier defeats Wheaton; Edberg eliminated

INDIAN WELLS, California (AP) — Top seeded Jim Courier defeated David Wheaton in straight sets Tuesday, but No. 3 Stefan Edberg of Sweden was upset by Richey Reneberg in second round action of the \$1.7 million Champions Cup.

Courier, the No. 1 player in the world, struggled a bit in beating Wheaton 6-3, 7-6 (7-5), needing nearly two hours to advance to the third round, where he'll meet Todd Martin.

Reneberg ranked 60th in the world, outlasted Edberg 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 by winning the final four games of the match.

In other second-round action, fourth seeded Michael Chang eliminated Jonathan Stark 6-4, 6-4; Martin upset 16th seeded Arnaud Boetsch of France 6-4, 5-7, 7-6, and 13th seeded Malivai Washington topped Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland 6-2, 6-2.

Mark Rosset of Switzerland was scheduled to face Mark Woodforde of Australia, but Woodforde withdrew because of a strained left hamstring. Diego Perez was a last minute replacement.

Courier said he never got into a solid rhythm against Wheaton.

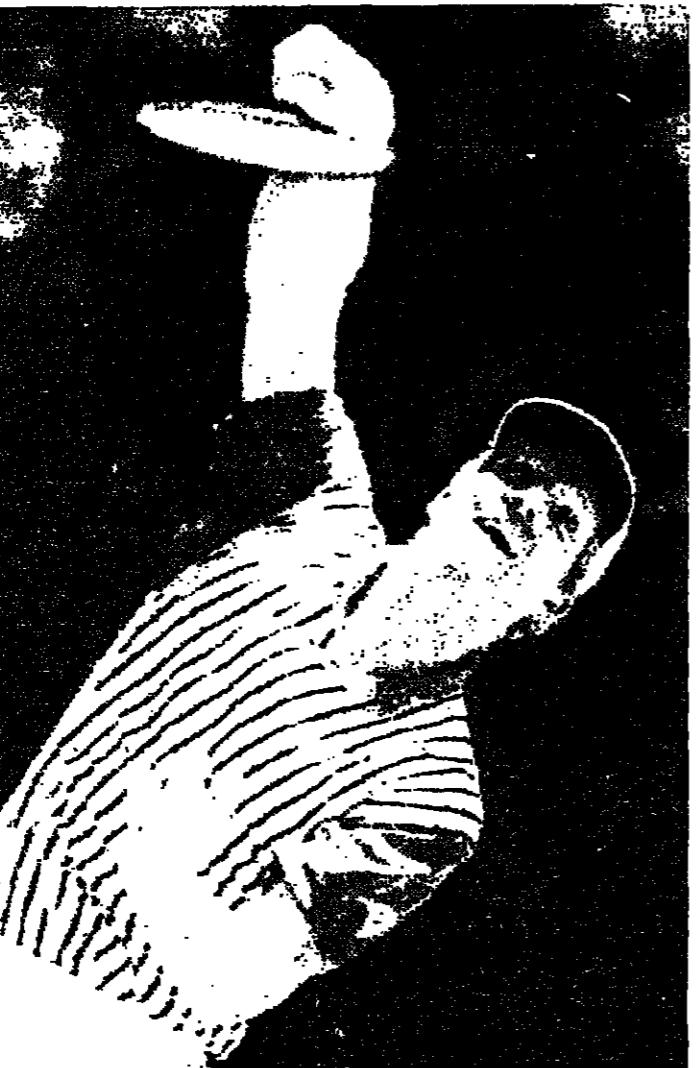
"I was just hanging in there, trying to hold serve," Courier said. "He's very dangerous. When he plays me, he tries to dictate everything. He takes chances and takes big risks."

Wheaton said he thought both he and Courier played well.

"It didn't feel like a second round match," Wheaton said. "It was more like a semifinal or a final because of the intensity. I felt like I did what I needed to do."

Reneberg beat Edberg for the first time after losing five matches to the world's third ranked player. In the eighth game of the third set, with Edberg ahead a service break, Reneberg took a 40-level lead before Edberg won two points. However, Reneberg hit a forehand winner to even the set.

Reneberg then held service and



Jim Courier following through on his serve

broke Edberg again to end the 2-hour, 4-minute match.

"There's no question I played about as well as I could, and he didn't play his best," Reneberg said. "I'm very happy that for the first time, I've beaten a guy in the top five."

Edberg said he blew the chances he had to finish off Reneberg.

"At 4-3, I was serving quite well, and he returned well, and he changed everything," Edberg said. "I lost my timing a little bit."

Graf scores easy win

It was easy for Steffi Graf but a struggle for Arantxa Sanchez Vicario as the top seeds won their opening matches Tuesday in the \$375,000 Virginia Slims of Florida tennis tournament.

One of a trio of three-time winners of the tournament in its nine years, Graf rolled past Yayuk Basuki of Indonesia 6-2, 6-1.

Spain's Sanchez Vicario, the second seeded player here, was pushed almost to the limit before ousting Canadian Helen Kelsi, 7-6, (7-3) and 7-5.

Blasting away with a serve that sometimes reached 100 mph (160 kph), Graf won 23 points on her first serve. She swept through eight straight games in one stretch and broke Basuki's service five times in the match that lasted just 47 minutes.

"I played some solid tennis after we got going," Graf said. "We were both a little tentative at the start, getting used to the wind and the court surface."

This is the first time the tournament has been played at the new Delray Beach Tennis Centre.

Ben Johnson tests positive again for drugs — newspaper

TORONTO (R) — Canadian Ben Johnson, who served a two-year suspension after failing a drugs test at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, has tested positive again, the Toronto Star newspaper reported Wednesday.

The Star said Johnson's positive test had been confirmed by three independent sources, all of whom spoke to the paper on condition that they would not be identified.

Asked whether the Star could report that Johnson had tested positive, one highly-placed source replied: "You would be accurate," the newspaper reported.

In London, International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) spokeswoman Jayne Pearce said the federation had no confirmation of a positive test.

"We have no confirmation of a case involving Ben Johnson," Pearce said. "We will be in a position to comment after the doping commission meets."

The Star said when Johnson was contacted at home and asked about the report he replied "no comment" and when pressed used a profanity in ordering a reporter from his property.

"A source said the five-member IAAF doping commission is trying to co-ordinate everyone's schedule for a meeting to review Johnson's case in London, England. Four or five possible dates have been given to each member," the Star said.

If Johnson is guilty of using drugs he will be automatically banned for life.

IAAF sources said the doping commission was scheduled to meet soon but not necessarily in London.

They said commission chairman, Sweden's Arne Ljungqvist, was due to return home Wednesday after an overseas trip.

The Star said Johnson, 31, had been tested three times over six days in mid-January before leaving for indoor races in Europe.

He was tested at the Hamilton Spectator Indoor Games January



Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson at a press conference at the Seoul Olympics, where he was stripped of his 100 metres gold medal. Johnson has now allegedly failed another test and might face lifetime ban (AFP photo)

15, at a Grand Prix event in Montreal January 17 and in a random test two days later in Toronto.

The paper said a source told it the IAAF doping commission would be examining testosterone levels in Johnson's urine sample.

High testosterone levels, which can result from performance-enhancing drugs such as anabolic steroids, enable athletes to train harder and recover quicker from training sessions.

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He was tested at the Hamilton Spectator Indoor Games January

the World Indoor Championships in order to save both themselves and the organisers any possible embarrassment," the Star said.

The championship starts in Toronto March 12, without Johnson.

The Canadian, who won the 1987 world title in Rome in world record time, was stripped of his 1988 Olympic 100 metres gold medal and suspended from competition for two years after a banned anabolic steroid was found in his urine at the Seoul Games.

In 1989 he was stripped of all his world outdoor and indoor records as well as the world title.

After serving his suspension he returned to athletics and competed at last year's Barcelona Olympics but finished last in his 100 metres semifinal.

In January and February this year, Johnson posted impressive times at indoor meetings. In February he won a 50 metres event in France in 5.65 seconds, just 0.04 of a second outside the world record.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY MARCH 4, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Show that you want to get along well with others and think along spiritual lines as you enjoy the Moon trine your planet of good fortune, Jupiter and later in the day Mercury and Pluto...

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't seek any favours from those in power or authority in the morning after which you have sudden communications from a distance likely to work and a temptation to act too hastily with assets is inadvisable later.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You are depressed and lethargic in the morning but so suddenly you feel a spurt of energy that can make you act with too much haste and adversely.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Avoid a conflict between your boss and an associate while later it is essential that you sidestep a confrontation from a self righteous individual.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Work will seem to be a real drag and outside interests attract but later you find you get inspiration requiring study before putting in motion.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You feel you are too alone and want more company but it is not the day to seek those who do not come to you naturally, of their own volition.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You get a poor start on your outside duties today but then there seems to be a chance to do more than you had thought possible but results would be unsatisfactory.

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



"Stanley, has anyone told you that your cologne smells a lot like catnip?"

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan leads Bulls to sixth-straight victory

RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (R) — Michael Jordan bullded his way to a game-high 24 points to lead the Chicago Bulls to their sixth-straight victory, an 87-80 win over the New Jersey Nets in the National Basketball Association. B.J. Armstrong added 19 points for the Bulls, who beat the Nets for the ninth straight time. The game was delayed for 22 minutes late in the fourth quarter after New Jersey's Chris Morris splintered a backboard. In New York, Patrick Ewing scored 16 of his 30 points in the first quarter to spur the New York Knicks to a 107-98 victory over the Atlanta Hawks. The Hawks lost their third in a row despite a game-high 42 points from Dominique Wilkins, who sank 20 of 22 free throws. Atlanta has lost six of its last eight games. In Orlando, Shaquille O'Neal scored 25 points and pulled down 16 rebounds to lead the Orlando Magic to a 108-89 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves. In Indianapolis, Detlef Schrempf scored 26 points and Reggie Miller added 20 as the Indiana Pacers cruised to their third-straight victory, a 109-95 triumph over the slumping San Antonio Spurs.

Sheffield United beat Tottenham 6-0

LONDON (AP) — Struggling Sheffield United boosted its chances of avoiding relegation by hammering eight place Tottenham 6-0 in the English Premier League soccer action. Another relegation threatened team, Middlesbrough, gained a 1-0 victory at seventh-place Ipswich. The results mean Sheffield United climbed three places above Nottingham Forest, Everton and Crystal Palace to 17th place in the 22-team standings. Middlesbrough climbed one place to 19th. The Premier League game between last place Oldham and Liverpool was postponed because the Boundary Park field was frozen.

Maradona considers playing in Turkey

ISTANBUL (AP) — Argentine soccer megastar Diego Maradona may soon play for a Turkish team, press reports said Tuesday. Here for a friendly between his Spanish club FC Sevilla and Galatasaray Istanbul, Maradona told reporters that he might join the Turkish club if he fails to get what he wants from his present club after his contract runs out at the end of this season. Turkish agency Anatolia quoted Maradona as complaining to reporters that obscure players were fouling him to make the headlines.

Peanuts



JUMBLE

THAT SCRABLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WALOG

VEGIN

PANDEM

MODCEY



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

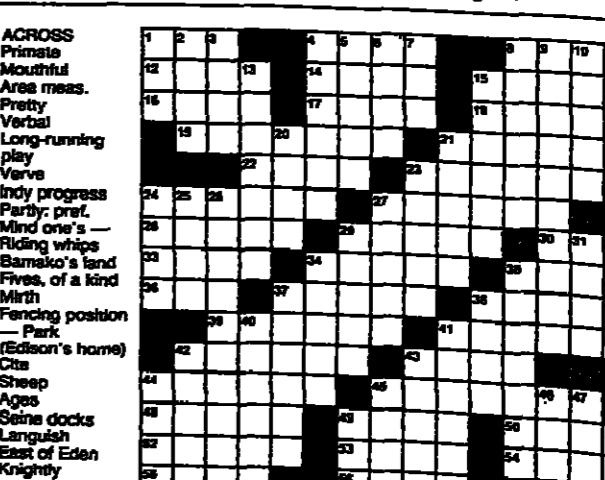
Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumble: GASSY CANAL ENGINE BEACON

Answer: How shrewd parrot acted—CAGEY

THE Daily Crossword

by Roger Jurgovan



Economy

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 4-5, 1993 7

Miyazawa rules out tax cut

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa has rejected growing opposition calls that Japan should stimulate its sagging economy with lower income taxes. "We must consider whether such income tax cuts would be effective and how to finance them," Mr. Miyazawa told the upper house of parliament. "I believe tax credits would cause problems. I cannot immediately agree to such opposition demands." With Japan facing one of the most stubborn downturns in decades, opposition parties have urged the government and ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to revise the draft budget for 1992/93 to include income and other tax breaks totalling 4.26 trillion yen (\$36.7 billion).

Mr. Kim's instruction followed up his election campaign pledge to revitalise the economy by phasing out government controls, which many believe are a drag on growth. The president, however, has not provided a detailed blueprint of his policies.

"To build a new economy, we must boldly abolish government regulations and controls that are no longer appropriate to the present time," the president told his first cabinet meeting for economic affairs.

Mr. Kim also moved loyalists into 50 key posts, including floor leader in parliament, to help push through planned reforms aimed at rooting out bureaucracy, corruption and the legacy of past authoritarian governments.

During the meeting, Deputy

Prime Minister Lee Kyung Shik, who also serves as economic planning minister, promised to ease the tight controls on the financial sector, where the United States and other trading partners say foreign firms suffer from excessive restrictions.

Under existing controls, senior government officials appoint most bank executives and the government gets most bank in-

terest rates. Korea's economy is the world's 10th largest.

Mr. Kim also was reported planning sweeping changes this weekend that would affect nearly all vice ministers, heads of government-invested organisations, provincial governors, mayors and envoys in key overseas posts.

Former Soviet republics establish gas, oil council

MOSCOW (AP) — Leaders of 12 former Soviet republics Tuesday formed an intergovernmental council to coordinate efforts to stabilise and develop their oil and gas sectors, news agencies reported.

The decision to form the council came during a two-day conference on energy cooperation between Commonwealth members held in the Siberian city of Surgut in Tyumen, Interfax and ITAR-TASS reported.

The council, which was joined by all the former Soviet republics except Latvia, Estonia and Turkmenistan, will coordinate actions between members in scientific, technical, investment and other areas, the agencies said.

A joint communiqué adopted in Surgut said the council would also help members to establish joint enterprises and develop

direct trade and economic ties between members, Interfax reported.

All European and Asian countries are eligible to join the council, which would be based in Tyumen, Russia's main oil-producing region.

Also at the conference, Russia agreed to continue supplying oil to Armenia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in exchange for equipment and materials to prop up its ailing energy industry, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Georgy Kizhza told Interfax.

Russian Fuel and Energy Minister Yuri Shafranik warned Moscow that Russia would stop exporting gas and oil to the former Soviet republics unless they provide financial support to the ailing industry.

Mr. Kizhza said no prices had been set yet concerning the bi-

lateral agreements with Russia. He attended the talks in place of Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who was ill.

The agreements will set the stage for similar deals between Russia and other former Soviet republics, Mr. Kizhza said.

Georgia agreed at the conference to supply pipes and engines to Russia in exchange for receiving shares of Russian oil and gas enterprises, Georgian Deputy Prime Minister Tengiz Segua said.

Mr. Kizhza also said Russia would not suspend gas supplies to Ukraine unless prime ministers of both countries fail to agree on price issues when they meet in Moscow later this week, Interfax said.

Russia is demanding that Spain pay a higher price for gas.

Felipe Gonzalez

Spanish premier offers plan to stimulate economy

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez offered a multi-billion dollar package of emergency measures Tuesday to increase public works projects and stimulate private investment to stem Spain's 20 per cent unemployment rate.

But, speaking in a special parliamentary session, the 50-year-old prime minister ruled out expansionary fiscal and monetary policies to jump start Spain's sagging economy.

Mr. Gonzalez rejected opposition calls for unilateral interest rate cuts, saying that easing Spanish monetary policy ahead of other European countries would fuel inflation, undermine Spain's competitiveness and eventually aggravate unemployment.

"There's no miracle answer to the economic situation we're going through," Mr. Gonzalez said, noting that Spain's economic slowdown was intrinsically linked with the decline in growth throughout Europe.

"We know from experience

that any attempt by one European country to go against, or diverge from the coordinated action taken by the other countries is condemned to failure," he said.

The prime minister said that the new stimulative measures

would not push spending over targets the government had set in its so-called convergence programme designed to push Spain to meet European Community requirements for monetary union.

It quoted Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as saying Iran wanted to use Slovenia's expertise in dam construction, telecommunications and other industries.

Arab Monetary Fund suspends Iraq, Sudan and Somalia

ABU DHABI (R) — The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) plagued by non-payment of arrears by hard-up members, has suspended three defaulting states — Iraq, Sudan and Somalia.

AMF officials declined to comment.

The AMF said in December it had granted Mauritania a \$14 million loan to help finance its 1993 economic reform programme. It said the loan was agreed by the AMF, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The AMF was set up in 1976 to support economic development. Early last year it said the default by the three countries was blocking plans to expand lending activity.

The AMF grants automatic loans to developing Arab states which do not have arrears with the fund to help finance balance of payments deficits and boost economic reform.

It extended loans to member states worth \$783.2 million by the end of 1992.

The sources said the board of governors decided last March to give the three countries and Mauritania six months to find a way to repay. When that period ended, only Mauritania was able to pay with a loan obtained from

AMF member countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

The sources said the suspension meant the three countries were no longer eligible for AMF loans and technical assistance but could still apply for credits from AMF affiliates such as the Arab Trade Finance Programme.

British Aerospace reports record loss for 1992

LONDON (R) — British Aerospace PLC has reported a record 1992 pre-tax loss of £1.2 billion (\$1.75 billion) after a £1 billion (\$1.46 billion) write off for the restructuring of its civil aircraft business.

The deficit was one of the highest British corporate losses on record, following a near £1 billion loss for Ford of Britain in 1991. "1992 was the most testing year in the company's history," Chairman John Cahill said.

"Our automotive, construction and property companies were all exposed to very harsh economic conditions. However, the defence company continued to perform robustly. Although a recovery in demand would be helpful, we are not counting on it. Volume or price can only be of marginal assistance to the group in the short term. Only cost-reduction programmes will have a real impact," Mr. Cahill added.

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To members of, Jordanian Scandinavian Friendship Association

Members of JSFA are kindly reminded to do their best to attend the annual general meeting which will be held on Saturday March 6th, 1993, at 20:00 hrs, at the Royal Automobile Club.

Your support by attending will be greatly appreciated.

The Board Of Directors



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Happy Feast

U.N. seeks entry to wounded in eastern Bosnia enclave

SARAJEVO (R) — The United Nations sought passage from rebel Serbs Wednesday for a fleet of trucks waiting to enter eastern Bosnia and evacuate sick and wounded civilians trapped by fighting in the Muslim enclave of Cerska.

Muslim-controlled Sarajevo Radio said up to 20,000 people were believed to be fleeing the area, where it said Serbs were moving freely and looting homes. The radio report could not be independently confirmed.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the 11 trucks, driven by Swedish firemen trained in first aid, were standing by on the Serbian side of the border with Bosnia.

They left Belgrade at dawn after Bosnian authorities told the UNHCR that up to 1,500 sick and wounded Muslims had fled from a Serb advance on Cerska to the nearby Muslim-held settlement of Konjevic Polje and required urgent evacuation.

Bosnian Serb leaders have refused to allow the trucks into the area, the target Monday of the first U.S. aid airdrops to trapped Muslims in eastern Bosnia, unless Muslim forces surrender, according to the UNHCR.

U.N. sources said aid officials would meet Serb army chief General Ratko Mladic Wednesday to try to break the deadlock.

"We sent the convoy (to the border) because we felt we had to get as close as possible and as soon as possible to the people in need pending negotiations on obtaining passage," UNHCR spokesman Manuel Almeida said in Zagreb.

Cerska has been cut off under Serb siege virtually since war between Bosnia's Serbs, Muslims and ethnic Croats erupted last April.

Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic said Muslim soldiers were "fighting desperately" to keep routes open for fleeing civilians and were slowing their withdrawal from the area.

It was impossible to establish whether Cerska had fallen. The Bosnian Serb army refused all comment. It has previously dismissed figures of up to 200,000 trapped Muslims in eastern Bosnia as grossly exaggerated.

The army headquarters is not going to comment on what is happening in Cerska or any other area during the U.S. humanitarian aid airdrops, a senior Bosnian Serb officer told Reuters by phone from army headquarters at Lukavica.

Four U.S. C-130 cargo planes dropped 20 tonnes of rations and medical supplies over Konjevic late Tuesday in a third straight night sortie from the Rhein-Main Airbase in Germany.

U.S. Defence Secretary Les Aspin said the airdrops might now be halted at least for the time being.

He said the airdrops were "a symbolic effort to try and use leverage to get the ground flow of humanitarian aid going and in that it was a success."

The UNHCR said it had received unconfirmed reports from radio hams that Serb artillery had opened fire on Konjevic and nearby Muslim-held Srebrenica after the airdrop.

There were no reliable reports of any of the latest aid being found.

Bosnian Serbs have bitterly criticised the U.S. operation, arguing that it will encourage Muslims to prolong the conflict in the former Yugoslav republic and eventually lead to American military intervention, a scenario Washington rejects.

While U.N. aid officials have welcomed the scheme as a supplement to more extensive ground operations, they questioned Mr. Aspin's assertion that the initiative had helped to free the flow of land convoys previously blocked by the Serbs.

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participate," Pentagon spokesman Bob Hall told reporters Tuesday. "They have a tremendous military capability."

NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner, after a meeting with President Bill Clinton, also welcomed Russia's participation.

"I think this is a good signal," Mr. Woerner told reporters in the White House driveway.

"And from the talks I just had, I know that the new administration sees it the same way."

NATO, hoping for the key role in enforcing an international peace plan for Bosnia, sent a delegation to the U.N. Wednesday to discuss sensitive problems over who exactly would run the peacekeeping operation.

Alliance sources say it is unclear how the United Nations would work with the U.S.-led NATO military Command and how other countries such as Russia or neutrals like Sweden would fit in to the operation, once a peace agreement is reached.

Senate Republican leader Bob Dole opened the day with criticism of Mr. Clinton's package, calling it a tax heavy plan that took the wrong approach to cutting the budget deficit.

In a quick counterattack, the White House pointed out that the national debt had quadrupled to more than \$4 trillion during the past 12 years of Republican administration.

Republicans have talked tough about deficit reduction but the deficit has kept going up,

White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said. "The Republicans have yet to put forward any spending cuts."

Sen. Dole, in a television interview, said Republicans were willing to give Mr. Clinton a hearing.

"There could be," Republican support for the plan in the end "if he's serious about wanting to negotiate," Sen. Dole said. "We are not making an effort to lock everybody in. ... He may not have the votes yet on the Democratic side."

Republicans have been saying that Mr. Clinton's programme

lacks tough spending reductions to match the higher taxes he wants.

Meanwhile with an ally in the White House for the first time in years, gun control advocates are pushing hard for national restrictions while getting mixed results in state battles with gun lobby

once considered all powerful.

New Jersey and Virginia are at the forefront of the state battles, which President Clinton plunged into Monday with pointed criticism of the National Rifle Association (NRA). He said the NRA and others are "fixated" on defending the right to bear arms to the degree they ignore violent crime.

There is evidence that the NRA's absolute opposition to restrictions has caused cracks in the organisation's imposing political strength. For example, many Virginia lawmakers complained about the NRA's absolutism and what they considered strong arm tactics before adopting a measure last week to limit handgun purchases.

U.S. President Bill Clinton (left) and Vice President Al Gore (right) talk with House Minority leader

Bob Michel as they walk through Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol (AFP photo)

Mitterrand to seek curb on presidential powers

PARIS (AP) — President François Mitterrand said Tuesday that constitutional reforms he will propose to the cabinet on March 10 will include curbs on presidential authority to invoke emergency powers.

Mr. Mitterrand told French media that he will ask that Article 16 of the constitution be stricken. It gives the president exceptional powers during a national emergency.

"I preferred a pure and simple striking of this article, rather than a new version," Mr. Mitterrand told French journalists.

The powers have been invoked only once. By President Charles De Gaulle in 1961 during an attempted putsch by French army generals opposed to Gen. De Gaulle's intention to give Algeria independence.

Mr. Mitterrand's disclosure marked the first significant glimpse of a constitutional reform process the president set in motion last fall in a bid to revive his sagging popularity. He said he intended to give parliament more powers and trim executive authority.

The Fifth Republic constitution in force since Gen. De Gaulle's return to power in 1958 gives the president some of the strongest powers in a Western democracy.

The president serves a seven-year term, appoints and fires prime ministers, controls foreign and defence policy, and can dismiss parliaments at will and call fresh elections.

Under Article 16, the president, after consultations with the prime minister and leaders of the National Assembly and Senate, may invoke dictatorial powers if the nation faces an immediate internal or foreign threat.

The proposal to strike the article drew immediate criticism from Alain Juppe, secretary-general of the Rally For the Republic Party that is Gen. De Gaulle's heir.

"This is a short-view decision. We oppose it," Mr. Juppe said. "Who can say what the situation will be like in France in five, 10, 15 years? Will France never again know exceptional circumstances?"

No one can say.

Mr. Mitterrand, who long criticised Gen. De Gaulle's constitution as undemocratic, promised to reform the charter when he was opposition leader but made little effort to do so after his election in 1981.

As his popularity slid in recent years, Mr. Mitterrand held out the carrot of change and finally made several proposals last fall to the Constitutional Council, France's highest constitutional authority.

Details have not been disclosed, but the president is not believed to have offered a significant reduction in the presidential term, demanded by conservative opponents who urge his resignation.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

45 Sikh rebels surrender in Punjab

BATALA, India (AP) — Gurnam Singh Jaura has killed 14 people, fought gun battles with police 10 times, and lived on the run changing hideouts every week — for the last six years. But the 30-year-old Sikh became fed up with his life as a guerrilla commander and recently surrendered to police in Batala town, a stronghold of the Sikh rebels. On Tuesday, Jaura and 44 other militants laid down their weapons at a police ceremony attended by 2,000 villagers and police officers, including the state police chief, K.P.S. Gill. They did so to avoid being captured or killed by police, not because they were offered a deal by the government, Mr. Gill said. About 650 guerrillas have given up since February 1992 when an elected government took over the northern state, ending seven years of largely ineffective federal rule, authorities say.

Peacekeepers arrive on Tajik border

MOSCOW (R) — A battalion of peacekeeping troops from Kyrgyzstan has taken up positions on the troubled border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, ITAR-TASS News Agency said Wednesday. The battalion is the first of four to be sent to reinforce border guards trying to prevent Muslim rebels crossing the frontier. TASS did not say when the Kyrgyz force arrived. On Tuesday, TASS said two Russian border guards were killed in fresh clashes in Tajikistan. The guards also have to deal with thousands of refugees fleeing a bloody clan conflict rocking the Central Asian state.

Philippine volcano erupts again

LEGAZPI, Philippines (R) — The Philippine volcano Mayon blasted out flaming ash in a new eruption Wednesday as rain swept mud and boulders down its slopes. No casualties were reported but relief officials ordered one road closed to motorists because rivers of mud had made it dangerous. A five-minute earthquake rocked the volcano as it hurled ash and other debris one kilometre into the air, volcanologists said. The blast also sent rocks left by previous eruptions tumbling four kilometres down Mayon's slopes, but the avalanche of debris did not reach villages around the mountain, they said. Mayon, which killed 73 people when it first exploded into life a month ago, last erupted Monday when it spewed lava, ash and sand. The series of eruptions has forced tens of thousands of villagers living within a 10-kilometre danger zone to flee their homes.

2 IRA suspects arrested

LONDON (R) — Two suspected Irish guerrillas were arrested after an apparent battle with police searching for the bombers of Harrods Department Store. Police said at least one shot was fired by the suspects and one of the two men suffered a head injury during the arrest by anti-terrorist police at a house in north London. It was not immediately clear how the head injury occurred but a police spokesman said he did not believe officers at the scene had opened fire. The men were arrested after a tip-off following the release earlier Tuesday of a security video showing two men walking near Harrods 30 minutes before a small bomb exploded outside the luxury London store in January. Three people were injured in the Harrods blast, claimed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) as part of their battle to oust Britain from Northern Ireland.

Support for Miyazawa 'founders'

TOKYO (R) — Support for scandal-plagued Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa continues to bump along the bottom, with voters angry over the faltering economy and lack of political reforms, a major newspaper said Wednesday. A nationwide poll of 2,294 voters published by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper found fewer than one in four voters, just 24 per cent, were happy with Mr. Miyazawa's cabinet. The figure was fractionally more encouraging for the government than a poll conducted by the same daily last December when the support rating hit a record low of 20 per cent. Mr. Miyazawa's cabinet was at its most popular shortly after he took office in November 1991, with an approval rating of 54 per cent of people.

Russian suicide rate jumps 18%

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's economic turmoil is reflected in its late demographics, a newspaper reported Tuesday, noting that suicides are up 18 per cent and the population has dropped for the first time since World War II. "It is a direct reflection of the crisis in our society," the daily Izvestia wrote in an article based on figures from the State Committee For Statistics. "These figures are frightening," said a committee expert quoted by the newspaper. A dropping birth rate and a rising mortality rate combined to reduce Russia's population by 40,000 to 140 million, it said. Russia lost 250,000 people to deaths from unnatural causes — including suicide, homicide, infant mortality and accidents — last year alone.

Vietnam rejects U.N. charges

PHNOM PENH (AP) — Vietnam Wednesday rejected charges by U.N. peacekeepers that it had violated a peace accord by leaving former soldiers behind in Cambodia.

The accord, signed by Vietnam and Cambodia's four factions in 1991, says all "foreign forces" must be withdrawn from Cambodia. Vietnam said it met the requirement in 1989.

The U.N. peacekeeping operation in Cambodia said Monday it found three former Vietnamese soldiers, two of whom were serving in the army or militia of the Vietnamese installed government in Phnom Penh. All three were married to Cambodian women and had children by them.

A statement issued in Phnom Penh Wednesday by Vietnam's Foreign Ministry said Vietnam was not responsible for the men because they had been demobilised between eight and 10 years ago. It interpreted foreign forces as people still serving their governments.

Leonard Spector, analyst with the Carnegie Endowment, said North Korea poses a greater threat because it is on the verge of having a nuclear bomb, while Iran's capability may be 8-10 years away. He said Soviet weapons held by Ukraine also pose a major threat.

Geoffrey Kemp, also a Carnegie analyst, said the possibility of Russian nuclear weapons becoming

available on world markets poses the No. 1 threat, Iran being a possible purchaser with its large oil revenue.

Michael Krepon, of the Henry L. Stimson Centre, said the fact that experts disagree on where the worst threat lies underscores the seriousness of the post-cold war danger from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as trade in conventional weapons.

The fact that so many former Soviet nuclear scientists and engineers may be lured away by other countries adds to the threat, he said.

The panel of witnesses agreed that the Clinton administration should have more prominent people to deal with the nuclear proliferation threat, either in the State or Defense Departments or both, as well as the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, which has lately played only a weak role.

Mr. Freedenberg, former under secretary of commerce, said that export controls are a major means of stemming proliferation, but they pose a dilemma.

"Controlling the export of United States products and technology costs jobs and stifles growth in our most competitive sectors," he told the committee.

He said U.S. export growth has been particularly strong to China, India, the Pacific rim and the Middle East, where there also is a market for weaponry.

"Haphazard liberalisation of export controls in order to take advantage of these growth poses dangers of proliferations and the erosion of U.S. strategic superiority," he said.

But Mr. Freedenberg said international cooperation can lead to an enhancement of U.S. export competitiveness while still protecting U.S. security and foreign interests.

So, however, he said non-proliferation rules have been "overlapping and confusing," with most exporters ill equipped to make judgments based on the vague standards.

The result is "the worst of two worlds," he said, with cautious American companies losing profits and other countries still able to obtain weapons technology or products from other sources.

which said currying favour with the West was one of the main weaknesses of the recent past.

The document, which represented a sharp change of outlook by the ministry, strongly hinted Moscow favoured regaining the superpower status it lost when the Soviet Union collapsed.

It echoed opposition claims, which the ministry used to dismiss out of hand, that Russia should remain a dominant power in the former Soviet Union as well as in Eastern Europe.

"As long as we do not have a foreign policy concept and a military doctrine, we will have to adopt a defensive position. The Russian Armed Forces have never behaved in that way, only staying in defence," Mr. Yeltsin said.

No one was available in Mr. Yeltsin's press office to clarify his comments on the armed forces.

The Security Council was formed last year to oversee all issues concerning Russia's external and internal affairs.

Ministers are also having to fend off attacks from hardliners who accuse the government of abandoning foreign and military policy in its haste to become a lapdog of its Western masters.

In particular, they have saved the decision to withdraw troops from the Eastern European and moves to coordinate foreign policy with Washington.

The danger is that apart from making groundless criticisms of what we're doing, people are talking more and more about the strategic goals of the political leadership of Russia and other questions," Mr. Yeltsin told the Security Council.

The Foreign Ministry last month presented parliament with a blueprint of policy priorities

which called for the Commonwealth of Independent States and be part of Russia's nuclear arsenal.

Ukraine says they should stay under Commonwealth command but that Kiev should exercise "administrative control" or responsibility for troop units at Soviet Union collapse.

Meanwhile, Russia's Baltic Fleet will cut its numerical strength by 39 per cent eventually and will start removing ships from the three Baltic states this year, a naval commander said in remarks published Tuesday.

Baltic Fleet Commander Admiral Vladimir Yegorov told the Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) military newspaper that the fleet will soon withdraw outdated missile submarines and some modern vessels from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.